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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

DATE DISTR 18 JAN 51

SUBJECT Finsterwalde Airfield

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1. The seventy single-engine fighters previously located at Finsterwalde left the field on 10 and 19 October 1950. They took off in groups of three. On 19 and 20 October fifty-six twin-engine bombers arrived at the field.* They are parked on the tar apron directly in front of the hangars, under tarpaulins supported on poles. The bombers have engines slung under the wings and double stabilizers on the tail assembly. They mount a device resembling a machine gun, which extends to the rear from the cockpit area. Their landing gear has two wheels forward and one small wheel under the tail. Eleven additional twin-engine bombers of the same type arrived at Finsterwalde on 24 October.
2. Soviet jet fighters, scheduled to arrive at Finsterwalde on 24 October, failed to appear. However, on 26 October, two swept-back wing jet fighters landed at the field and remained twenty minutes. As soon as the jets left the field rush work was begun on widening the taxi strip leading to the hangars by twelve meters. This work proceeds day and night, in three shifts.
3. On 20 November 104 planes at the field. Approximately fifty were bombers and the rest fighters and biplanes.**
4. On 12 January 1950 work was begun tearing up the former German air strip and building the present strip. The ground was dug down to a depth of 30 centimeters. A layer of stones and a layer of gravel were then put in. The surface layer, consisting of concrete blocks ten meters square by fifteen centimeters thick, was laid on top of this. The tar apron in front of the hangars is about 700 meters long, and wide enough for two of the bombers stationed there to pass each other abreast. There is some indication that a second feeder runway is to be built from the apron to the landing strip. According to the blueprint of the runway tacked up in the construction shack, the length of the landing strip is 2500 meters. Construction work on the landing strip was completed on 9 November. A drainage ditch, which is approximately six meters deep and empties into a pond approximately 100 meters by 120 meters on the opposite side of the road to Finsterwalde, has been dug along the northeast side of the landing strip.

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Director of Central Intelligence to the
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5. Planes using the airfield always take off and land in a westerly direction. When planes are coming in to land, three large closed communications trucks are stationed at the runway, one at each end and one in the center. When the trucks are in position, a mast is raised automatically from each of them, which reaches a height of fifteen meters at full extension. Four guy wires hold the masts secure in this position.
6. The dispensary for the unit at Finsterwalde is located in the glass-topped control tower, and two ambulances are kept in the vicinity.
7. The construction of 48 underground gasoline storage tanks was completed early in November. Forty-five will each hold 80,000 to 90,000 liters and the other three approximately 40,000 liters each. An estimated one and one-half million liters of gasoline has been stored in these tanks to the present. The tanks are arranged in a symmetrical "Y"-shaped pattern immediately to the west of the spur railroad track which runs south of the field in back of the hangars. The tanks are set about 12 meters apart. Beside each tank stands a red fire extinguisher, about three feet in height. The gasoline is led into the tanks from tank cars by means of a hose. Green wooden boxes, each approximately two and one-half feet high and two feet wide have been placed over the mouths of the tanks. The entire area has been planted with grass for purposes of camouflage. In the center of the "Y" are located three shacks which contain barrels of oil. Between the shacks, work has been completed on two wells, each 20 meters deep, for the field's water supply. A fence between six and eight feet high, with barbed wire on top, has been built around the entire gasoline dump. (See attached sketch).
8. In addition to the storage complex, there are three or four gas tanks at the southeast corner of the runway, mounted on a wooden scaffolding which is sunk into the ground so that about half of each tank extends above the surface. These tanks serve the daily needs of the planes on the field and are filled each day from a railway tank car.
9. Immediately to the west of the gasoline dump, six concrete bunkers, 2.5 meters deep by 15 meters by ten meters, are now under construction. Their function is not known. They are being built flush to the ground with roofs consisting of a first layer of boards, a second layer of tar, a third layer of tar paper, and a fourth layer of earth. One of the bunkers had been completed by 20 October.
10. In the woods south of the Schacksdorf-Mehesdorf wood road, and immediately to the east of the spur railroad line which serves the gas dump, an underground chamber has been built. Heavy wooden pit props were used in the construction. The chamber is sealed with tar-soaked cloth, apparently to make it air tight. The roof of the structure is flush with the ground, and a flight of steps leads down into the chamber. Since 25 October, the personnel of the airfield have been sent to the chamber in groups of ten, officers in the morning and enlisted men in the afternoon. When a group of ten is inside, a chemical grenade about eight inches long is tossed into the chamber, making a great deal of smoke. The door is then closed. The group remains in the chamber for one hour, wearing gas masks, which are removed when the men emerge. The persons subjected to this test show no signs of discomfort or strain.
11. Four new log sheds have been built in the munitions area north of the airstrip. They are five meters wide, six meters long, and one and one-half meters high. The roofs are covered with tar paper. Two barracks have been built in the woods east of the munitions dump.
12. The electric power lines serving the airfield enter the area from the western edge, at a point just north of the junction of the Finsterwalde-Mehesdorf and the Mehesdorf-Schacksdorf roads. The overhead lines are strung on poles about 11 meters high. They run parallel to the airstrip at a distance of about 45 meters south of it. It is planned to replace these lines with underground cables.

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13. Four antiaircraft emplacements have been built just south of the gasoline dumps. Two firing ranges for small arms, approximately 52 meters in length, have been built alongside the antiaircraft emplacements. The firing ranges' back stop, which is constructed of dirt reinforced behind with a wooden wall, is approximately three meters high. Half-grown trees have been planted around the area.
14. A guard barracks with between 20 and 25 beds has been built at the west end of the field on the road from Schacksdorf to Nehesdorf. It is located near the junction of the Finsterwalde-Nehesdorf road and the Schacksdorf-Nehesdorf road. The entire area surrounding the field including the woods is under heavy guard by Russian military personnel. Numerous telephones for use by the guard personnel have been installed throughout the area, including the woods.
15. No civilians other than the 172 presently employed in the construction at the field are allowed in the area. All work is scheduled to be completed by 1 December 1950, after which time only military personnel will be allowed near the field.
16. The commanding officer of the airfield is Colonel Prokov. He is about 5'8" tall, about 40 years of age, weighs about 190 pounds, and has full features, dark eyes and a dark complexion.

17. [REDACTED]

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18. [REDACTED]

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* [REDACTED] Comment: According to reports [REDACTED] no air unit was stationed at Finsterwalde while construction work was being done on the runway.

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[REDACTED] confirms the return to Finsterwalde in October 1950 of the bomber regiment stationed there prior to the beginning of construction work early in 1950. It makes no mention, however, of the departure of seventy fighters from the field.

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** [REDACTED] Comment: This figure seems too high for aircraft strength at a single airfield. The presence of fighter planes in any number is also questioned, since only one bomber regiment has been confirmed at the field.

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